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**BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS FOR THE CITY OF CHICAGO AS A DULY CONSTITUTED ELECTORAL BOARD**

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| Objections of: DWAYNE BELLE | ) | |
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| | ) | |
| To the Nomination | ) | No.: 23-EB-ALD-039 |
| Papers of: JUSTIN SAWYER | ) | |
| | ) | Rel.: 23-EB-ALD-056 |
| Candidate for the office of | ) | |
| Alderperson of the 21st Ward, City of | ) | |
| Chicago | ) | |
| | ) | |

**FINDINGS AND DECISION**

The duly constituted Electoral Board, consisting of the Board of Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago, Commissioners Marisel A. Hernandez, William J. Kresse and June A. Brown, organized by law in response to a Call issued by Marisel A. Hernandez, Chair of said Electoral Board, for the purpose of hearing and passing upon objections ("Objections") of DWAYNE BELLE ("Objector") to the nomination papers ("Nomination Papers") of JUSTIN SAWYER, for the office of Alderperson of the 21st Ward ("Candidate") at the Municipal General and Alderperson Elections to be held on Tuesday, February 28, 2023, having convened on Friday, December 9, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. and having heard and determined the Objections to the Nomination Papers in the above-entitled matter, finds that:

1. Objections to the Nomination Papers of the Candidate were duly and timely filed.

2. The Electoral Board was legally constituted under the laws of the State of Illinois.

3. A Call to the hearing on said Objections was duly issued by the Chair of the Electoral Board and served upon the members of the Electoral Board, the Objector and the

Candidate, by registered or certified mail and by Sheriff's service, as provided by statute or service was waived.

4. A public hearing held on these Objections commenced on Friday, December 9, 2022 and was continued from time to time. The Electoral Board assigned this matter to Hearing Officer Rodney Stewart for further hearings and proceedings.

5. The Objector and the Candidate were directed by the Electoral Board to appear before the Hearing Officer on the date and at the time designated in the Hearing Schedule. The following persons, among others, were present at such hearing: The Objector, DWAYNE BELLE, and/or his attorney, MICHAEL J KASPER; and the Candidate, JUSTIN SAWYER, and or his Attorney, JAYMAN A. AVERY, III.

6. The Hearing Officer ordered that an examination of the voter registration records be conducted by clerks and agents under the Board's direction and supervision, in accordance with the laws of Illinois and the rules of the Board.

7. The Hearing Officer directed all parties to appear and be present, either personally and/or by their authorized representatives, during this records examination.

8. The Candidate and/or his duly authorized representative was present during the examination of the registration records.

9. The Objector and/or his duly authorized representative was present during the examination of the registration records.

10. The examination of the registration records was completed and the Electoral Board hereby adopts and incorporates by reference the results of the records examination conducted by its clerks and agents. The written report of the result of the registration records

examination is contained in the Electoral Board's file in this case and a copy has been provided or made available to the parties.

11. The results of the records examination indicate that:

A. The minimum number of valid signatures required by law for placement on the ballot for the office in question is 473;

B. The number of purportedly valid signatures appearing on the nominating petition filed by the Candidate total 818;

C. The remaining number of signatures deemed valid as a result of the records examination total 337.

12. The Electoral Board finds that the number of valid signatures appearing on the Candidate's nominating petition following completion of the records examination was less than the minimum number of valid signatures required by law to be placed upon the official ballot as a candidate for the office of Alderperson of the 21st Ward.

13. No motions were filed pursuant to Rule 8 of the Board's Rules of Procedure.

14. The Hearing Officer has tendered to the Electoral Board a report and recommended decision. Based upon the evidence presented, the Hearing Officer found that the Candidate's Nomination Papers contained only 337 valid signatures, which is less than the minimum number of valid signatures required by law to be placed upon the official ballot as a candidate for the office of Alderperson for the 21st Ward, and that the Candidate's Nomination Papers should be found invalid.

15. The Electoral Board, having considered the evidence and arguments tendered by the parties and the Hearing Officer's report of recommended findings and conclusions of law,

hereby adopts and incorporates the Hearing Officer's recommended findings and conclusions of law.

16. For the reasons stated above, the Electoral Board finds that the Candidate has an insufficient number of valid signatures on his nominating petitions and that the Nomination Papers of JUSTIN SAWYER are, therefore, invalid.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the Objections of DWAYNE BELLE to the Nomination Papers of JUSTIN SAWYER, candidate for election to the office of Alderperson of the 21st Ward, are hereby SUSTAINED and said Nomination Papers are hereby declared INVALID and the name of JUSTIN SAWYER, candidate for the office of Alderperson for the 21st Ward, SHALL NOT be printed on the official ballot for the Municipal General and Alderperson Elections to be held on Tuesday, February 28, 2023.

Dated: Chicago, Illinois, on Friday, January 6, 2023.

Marisel A. Hernandez, Chair

William J. Kresse, Commissioner

June A. Brown, Commissioner

**NOTICE: Pursuant to Section 10-10.1 of the Election Code (10 ILCS 5/10-10.1) a party aggrieved of this decision and seeking judicial review of this decision must file a petition for judicial review with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County within 5 days after service of the decision of the Electoral Board.**